

The Divine Life

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3i 1st April 1956

Sri Mahomed Abdullah
Cairo.

The purpose of life is the
realisation of the essential
divinity in man. The Science
of Yoga points out the way.

Yoga is primarily a process of
Self-culture. Practice of Yog.
bestows a rich and full life.

Practice of self-restraint,
mental equipoise, truthfulness,
compassion, purity, selflessness
and meditation constitutes
the process of Yoga.

May Lord bless you, Sivananda

RELIGIOUS CALENDAR

[Sivananda Nagar]

(April 16 to May 15, 1956)

April

- 19 Sri Rama Navami;
Samartha Ramadas
Jayanti;
34th All-India Yoga-
Vedanta Conference
begins.
- 21 Ekadasi
- 22 Pradosha Puja;
Yoga-Vedanta Con-
ference ends.
- 22/23 Mahavira Jayanti
- 24 Hanuman Jayanti
- 30 Poor-feeding Day

May

- 6 Ekadasi
- 8 Pradosha Puja
- 10 Amavasya
- 13 Parasurama Jayanti
- 14/15 Sankaracharya Jayanti
- Special Ganga and Lakshmi
Puja on all Fridays



DIVINE LIFE

Volume Eighteen

April, 1953

Number Four

The Voice of Jesus

Sri Swami Sivananda

Jesus, the Son of God, and Divine Messenger upon earth, is verily the Infinite Love, Compassion and the Saving Grace of the Almighty, descended amidst humanity in the radiant form of a glorious human personality, the like of which mankind has rarely seen. The Almighty Spirit manifested Itself as an embodied Being for the uplift of mankind enmeshed in the binding net of earthly existence. Jesus came with the heartening Message of Hope to a humanity weighed down under the burden of its sinful, ungodly life of mere materialistic pursuits. He came to show the direct and easy way of freeing oneself from the guilt and bondage of an undivine living and of attaining the Joy, Bliss and Blessedness of the glorious Divine Life in the Spirit, or Atman. He taught the gospel of a pure life, a life of perfect faith, childlike simplicity and innocence, selflessness and love of all beings. Jesus lived and preached the sublime doctrine of renunciation of mammon, and worship of God.

Voice of the Eternal Being

The Voice of Jesus is verily the Voice of the Eternal Being. Through Him is expressed the call of the Infinite to the

finite, the Cosmic Being to the individual, the call of God to man. His Divine Voice is the same, therefore, as the Voice of the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Voice of the Koran, the Zend-Avesta, the Dhammapada, and all such sacred scriptures of the great religions of the world. Fundamentally the gospel that he preached is at one with the gospel expounded through these holy books. It is the way of denying the flesh and asserting the Spirit. It is the way of crucifying the lower self to bring about a glorious Resurrection of the Spirit and the final Ascension unto the Infinitude and the Transcendence unto the Divine. It is no other than the Upanishadic path of rejecting the *Preya* and accepting the *Shreya*, the negation of the Anatman and the living of the life in the Atman.

Jesus declares: "Ye cannot serve both God and mammon" In other words, His teaching implies: Detach. Attach. Detach yourself from material objects of this transient world. Attach yourself to the Eternal Spiritual treasure of Atman. Christ thus teaches us the great way of going beyond all sin and sorrow. His sermon is

that which leads us from the darkness of this worldly existence of birth, death, disease and pain, unto the everlasting Light of glorious Divine Consciousness. It takes us away from the unreality of empirical phenomena to the Eternal Verity of Transcendental Being, from the limited mortal existence to Unlimited Life Immortal.

Who Jesus Was

The vital importance and the deep significance of Jesus and His immortal teachings will become clear to us only when we consider who Jesus was and how He came into being. Jesus was not an ordinary human being. He was the Divine Power and Love incarnated upon this globe for a special divine purpose. His advent was in the nature of a fulfilment of the Divine Plan for this world-process. This will be seen from the very manner of His birth and its background. Even before He illumined this terrestrial globe by the radiance of His Divine Presence, His advent was proclaimed and preached and broadcast by a Chosen Man of God, whom we know as John the Baptist.

It came about thus. Zacharias the priest and his wife Elizabeth were a holy and pious couple of Judea. We are told how the Angel Gabriel appeared to the good old priest and announced that it is God's Will that a son be born to him. He was to be the one to herald the advent of the Divine Son of God and to prepare the people for receiving Him. This boy, thus mysteriously born through Divine dispensation, grew up into a Holy Man, who came to be known as John the Baptist, and to fulfil Angel Gabriel's prophecy he made ready "a people prepared for the Lord." He thus paved the way for Jesus' incarnation. Later when actually the sacred and blessed hour of the Lord's birth drew near, the Heavens proclaimed His Divinity by a great Light that guided wise sages and the

chosen among the faithful to the place of the Lord's Nativity. Thus the Light of the world first shone through the darkness of this world of delusion and nescience.

The Way He Taught

The way in which Jesus lived and taught was simple, yet sublime. His mode of teaching was something extraordinary. Jesus was no academic scholar. He could lay claim to neither degrees nor doctorate. He was not a pundit or a savant. He had not attained proficiency or mastery in any practical art or science. He did neither indulge in high-flown oratory nor deliver learned pulpit sermons. When He spoke, He spoke but shortly and His brief words were few. His sayings were short, pithy and almost aphoristic. But His words were vibrant with an extraordinary power that was not of this world. They were vital and aflamed. They burnt themselves into the depths of the very consciousness of His hearers. And the reason?

When Jesus spoke, His blessed words came from the depths of a limitless Love and an infinite Divine Compassion that thrilled and thrilled again with an all-consuming, powerful desire to do good to men, to serve, to help and to save. This compassion to purify, to raise and to save mankind verily constitutes the sacred Heart of Jesus the Christ. This Love enlivened His words with a Divine Force, which made them to be permanently enshrined in the hearts of the fortunate hearers of His own blessed times and no less of the millions who read them even to this day through the holy pages of the Sacred Bible.

Practical Spirituality

Jesus was absorbed in the task of showing unto mankind a way out of this mundane life and attaining Eternal Bliss. He came to save man from this ocean of birth-death existence and to take them across to the other shore of Immortal Life. Therefore,

He preached the gospel of practical spirituality. Leaving aside all abstruse philosophical theory and subtle intellectual researches, Jesus told man how he must live, what he must think, what he must feel, and what he must do. To do this he clothed even the highest truths of spiritual life with simple stories and parables which even the common man in the street could easily grasp and comprehend. Couched in the form of simple parables, the deepest wisdom of spiritual life became expressed before man, through the sweet and blessed words of Divine Jesus. Innumerable are the divine admonitions of Christ. Even a consideration of a select few of them would help to throw a great deal of light upon the path towards the attainment of the spiritual goal.

"Sin No More"

As we consider the sublime life of the Saviour, one of the very first important spiritual truths revealed to us comes through one of the most moving incidents recorded in the Gospel. The compassionate Lord moving through the city street comes suddenly upon an angry crowd. He sees that they are all taken wrathful with a woman who was caught in the act of sin, and were about to punish her with death. At the approach of the Saviour, the hapless woman takes shelter at His feet, shedding tears of remorse. Jesus turns with His serene and yet compelling countenance upon the angry crowd and challenges them to lift a hand against this woman, saying, "let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone." There is silence. All angry voices die out. Fear enters the heart of the multitude. Dropping the stones and sticks, the crowd disappears. Jesus is left alone with the repentant sinner at His feet. He raises her up and sends her away saying "go and sin no more." In these few words He reveals

to us the great Law of the Spiritual Realm, i.e., that the soul which repents sincerely, gets absolved of all sins and receives the blessings of the Divine Compassion. O man! learn ye that if you will aspire for the true Grace, you have but to turn away from your evil ways and resolve that you will "sin no more."

Ingress of Divine Blessing

Should you but take this step of turning away from the darkness of evil in life, and step towards the light of a pure and divine life, then indeed you do open yourself up for the ingress of the Lord's blessings. But if these blessings are to enter into your being and attain their fullness and bear fruit in the form of rich spiritual experience, then you must prepare your heart for their right and proper reception, just as a farmer prepares the soil fully for the seeds to germinate and develop into a rich harvest.

What important part the right and proper receptivity of the seeker plays in the progress of spiritual life is brought out in a beautiful parable by Jesus. One warm, sultry day in Capernaum the Lord has spent a busy forenoon, preaching, teaching, healing, consoling, inspiring and instructing vast multitudes that had thronged around Him. Towards evening He walks upon the shore of the lake. There, too, the multitudes follow. They press upon Him and Jesus gets into a boat and rowing a few yards away from the shore anchors upon the water. From there He turns upon the eager gathering. In sweet accents His loving words come to them.

He tells them how a farmer scatters the seeds for his field which is by the roadside. There is a strong breeze. Some of the seeds are blown away and fall by the roadside, where birds pick them up and they are lost. Some seeds fall upon dry, hard rocks. There they have no soil

to take root in. They wither up in the sun and die. Yet others fall upon good soil, but being in the midst of thorns and brambles, though the seeds sprout up and the young seedlings grow into small plants, they are choked by thorns and brambles, and finally die. And lastly, those seeds that have fallen into good soil grow, develop, flourish and turn into a rich harvest.

Even so, though the Lord in His Loving Mercy is scattering abroad the precious seeds of spiritual truths that are to bear a harvest of supreme bliss, yet, unfortunately, all do not benefit fully out of them. Some hearts are so much constantly preyed upon by desires and earthly passions (birds) that the blessings of the Lord are not allowed to remain there at all. Some hearts are so totally dry, being devoid of faith and devotion, that in them spiritual truths wither and perish, even as the seeds fallen upon rocks do. In some other good natures, seeds of spiritual life take root and start to grow, but alas, the harsh thorns of bad company, worldly association and impure and undivine environment, choke the young spiritual plant and destroy it.

It is only the fortunate ones, the sincere and earnest seekers who have rendered themselves eminently receptive to all spiritual influences and who have prepared their hearts fully by prayer, spiritual discipline and selfless service, that reap the maximum benefit from the blessings that are ever being conferred by the Lord upon all mankind through His Divine Messengers, the saints and sages and devotees of all times and climes and through the sacred scriptures of all the great religions of the world. Therefore, O aspirant, through Sadachar and Seva, through diligent practice of Yama-Niyama, through the acquisition of Sadhana-Chatushthaya, prepare your in-

ward being perfectly, if you wish to reap the glorious harvest of spiritual bliss.

Sense of Values

If you are to ask why indeed should one take so much pains to receive the spiritual seeds, the reply is given through a number of connected parables. They go to explain how unparalleled and peerless indeed is the precious treasure of spiritual Realization. It is far more than all the wealth and enjoyment of entire earth put together. For its sake, a wise man will gladly give up everything. It is like the hidden treasure suddenly uncovered by a man at the plough. Full of joy, he hides the secret until he has sold away all that he had in order to buy the particular field for himself. By this he obtains the treasure which he knows to be far superior to all his petty possessions. Or, imagine a merchant seeking the finest of pearls. Then one day he finds the most precious pearl he has ever seen. Recognizing its worth, he sells away all his other pearls, gems and his entire business in order to buy this pearl beyond all price.

Spiritual experience alone it is that gives worth to other aspects of life. Without it the other experiences of life are as nothing. It is like a little bit of yeast which a baker puts into a large quantity of flour. This little bit leavens the whole of the flour. Then again, how does the man of awakened discrimination act in his dealing with the spiritual and the material aspects of life? He knows which is good and which is useless. Therefore, he rejects the material and embraces the spiritual, just as a fisherman having drawn a net full of fish from the sea, keeps the good ones alone and casts away the bad ones back into the sea. The proper sense of values is revealed in this parable. You are told of your duty towards that which is worthy

and that which is worthless. Know therefore the rare worth of the spiritual ideal. The seeker should be ready and willing to cast away all unspiritual things and to firmly adhere to the spiritual aim of life.

Be Not Heedless

In seeking to work out the spiritual ideal, one should be ever ready to accept all opportunities that the Lord puts before him for gathering spiritual experience. If he fails to do so, the blessings of God may be withheld from him. "Beware" says Jesus through His effective parable of the rich man and his feast. The rich man prepared a great and delicious feast and sent his servants to bring his friends to dine. But they all made excuses for not coming. Each one had some personal preoccupation or other—one his newly bought land, another his oxen, a third his young wife, and so on. When the rich man heard these excuses, he was displeased. "Go into the city streets," he ordered his servants, "and bring in the poor, the crippled and the blind." When there was yet room, he ordered "go beyond the city into the highways and the hedges and make all the outcasts and the destitutes to come to the feast. Those who rejected my invitation shall never taste of my banquet." Even so, when opportunities for spiritual gain are offered, let one not commit the great blunder of rejecting them, for, later on, one will have to lament over the great gain that one deliberately bypassed and missed by one's neglect and heedlessness.

Need For Vigilance

Lastly, we come to the beautiful parable of the wise and the foolish bridesmaids, through which Jesus teaches how if we wish to avail of all spiritual opportunities, we need to be most alert and ever vigilant. Out of ten

bridesmaids who fell asleep while waiting for the bridegroom, five were wise and they carried spare oil for their lamps, but five were foolish and they did not. So when they were suddenly called upon the groom's arrival, the lamps of the foolish maidens were out, but the wise ones who had kept the lamps burning bright readily went to the joyous marriage function. But the others were too late and were thus excluded from the rejoicing. So you must ever keep watch, for you never know when the auspicious hour of spiritual blessedness comes.

Thus, through all these beautiful and wise parables, the Lord Jesus taught the valuable lessons of truth, repentance, receptivity, renunciation, ready surrender and ever-alert spiritual vigilance to the seekers upon the path of Yoga and Self-realization. He taught to us the great lesson of *uttishkhata jagrata prapya varanibodhata*. Thus He lived and taught nearly twenty centuries ago. Thus the Light shone and illumined, and then entered into His Apostles through whom it later spread and enveloped the entire earth.

May all pray to the Blessed Lord Jesus, the Christ, to illumine our inmost being with the Light of His lofty Divine Presence and to graciously bestow upon all the Bliss of Christ-Consciousness! May all humbly strive to follow in His footsteps, and thus rise from darkness into Eternal Light, from this unreal world of ephemeral phenomena into the Transcendental Reality of the Supreme Being! May all rise beyond this world of mortality and attain to Life Immortal! May the power of Divine Love and Grace lift all from this realm of pain and sorrow into the realm of Eternal Light and Everlasting Bliss! Hail to Jesus, Divinity Incarnate. Amen.

If one is to fear God, one can have no real love or devotion for Him.

Christ-Consciousness, or Cosmic Awareness

Sri Mark Halpern

[California]

Life is the great enigma that only the intuitive spiritual perception and not the intellect, can penetrate. Ever since we first began to use the mind, we have been trying to probe into the essential meaning of life. Sages have meditated on it. The immortal poets have sung of it in their undying epics. Philosophers have discoursed upon it and written about it; and scientists have analyzed the *how* of it, but are still searching after the *why* of it—that ever-elusive metaphysical *why* that surrenders itself at last only to the transcendent faculty of Absolute Awareness.

In these years, as never before, the people are asking themselves, "Is life worth while?" Befuddled by the critical and complex times, humanity is looking for a key to the mystery of existence—something that will reveal the significance of life here on earth.

But the Golden Key of Divine Wisdom is never found in the unilluminated mortal mind. We discover it only when our consciousness has risen above the unawakened little 'I-me-mine' self lost in the dark fog of materialistic values—when our consciousness has become fused with the Light of the Soul.

Oneness of Existence

For it is only through the Light of the Soul that we are able to enter into the illuminating cosmic awareness, not mere intellectual assent or theory, that life is One—and that One is God; or, if you prefer a less anthropomorphic designation, *The Absolute*. Once awakened in the Light of the Soul, we behold the same Light everywhere, in all things, whether animate or inanimate; and instead of separative differences, we see the Eternal Oneness and

Sameness behind all evolving entities. Then it is that we begin really to understand what we, as servants of humanity are expected to contribute towards the fostering of universal goodwill and right human relations. We are expected to contact the Light of the Soul and develop a *sustained* contact with that Light in illumined consciousness.

It should be evident that world peace and unity will not be built by more sensational inventions, or more destructive nuclear bombs, or increasing competition, for the accumulation of material possessions. Rather, they will be the result of a general transformation in great numbers of humanity itself—a transformation from the selfishly grasping separative consciousness into a magnanimously sharing and integrating cosmic awareness of the illumined consciousness.

Spontaneous Rhythm

In the light of the transformed consciousness, it is realized, indeed, that we, as human beings, are all of the same immortal divine parentage, that we are all undying golden flames of the same holy, consuming life-giving Fire of the One God, the Eternal Infinite Absolute. The all-pervading awareness of the illumined consciousness reveals that centre and periphery, beginning and ending, big and little, gain and loss, are one. It is a spontaneous rhythm that flows of itself in the effortless effort of a calm, waveless infinite ocean of illumined space, though at the same time centred in a profound, inner, all-enveloping, motionless silence.

To Know is to Become

That state of wondrous healing beatitude, beyond all relative dualistic thinking,

is entered through the Light of the Soul. But if it were to be asked, "How does one enter the Light of the Soul and thus help to illumine the Lighted Way," let us listen for the answer in the words of Jesus Himself, who pointed out the way when He spoke to His close disciples, not by parable as He taught in public, but in the unequivocal, non-compromising words of the Truth embodied in Himself. For He told them of the highest mystery, the ineffable, the simplest and the clearest of all—His own example, though He is to be known by him alone who utterly renounces the empty materialistic values of the transitory world; and this is this knowledge by which men become Christs, "for each man," He said "are Myself, and I am these men"; for Christ is that highest mystery; knowing that, men are transformed into pure Light and are brought into the Cosmic Light. And to know Christ is to become like Christ—to follow in His footsteps.

But we can never surrender completely the materialistic values of this world, so long as there is still the illusory dualism of separateness in our thinking. So strong is the tendency, through past mental conditionings, to believe or want to believe, that the creed or opinion we hold as our own is differently superior to that of others, that even when we no longer see our group or our denomination or race or religion as superior to another's, there may still be present in the consciousness of even the seekers in both the Orient and the Occident, that their teachings are the only true teachings. Who is right and who is wrong? Whether the teachings be Eastern or of Western is not important. What is important is to enter into the direct experience of the one Absolute Reality in the back of all teachings.

Love and Goodwill

We of the West must remember that the

Buddha, called the Lord of Wisdom, rather than the Lord of Love, left us some powerful words upholding the vital quality of Christly Love; although many in the West mistakenly feel that He spoke against the true spirit of love when He sought to wean people away from the ignorance which manifests in low selfish desires. We are prone to forget that neither selfish desire nor possessive attachment nor emotional affection has anything to do with the soul's mature illumined Love—the most abused word in all the languages of the human race.

But here is the meaning of Love in the language of the Buddha: "As a mother, even at the risk of her own life protects her son, her *only* son, so let there be goodwill without measure between *all* beings." Let goodwill without measure prevail in the whole world, above, below, around, unstiated, unmixed with any feeling of differing or opposing interests. If one remains steadfastly in this state of mind all the time he is awake, then is come to pass the saying, "Even in this world holiness has been found."

In defining the highly abstruse and controversial meaning of Nirvana, the Buddha taught that it is that state wherein "the Self-realization of Noble Wisdom is fully entered into,—where the manifestation of Perfect Love, that is the realization of the essential and intrinsic Oneness of all life, expresses itself in Noble Wisdom for the enlightenment of all,—where compassion for others transcends all thoughts of self,—there indeed is Nirvana."

Kingdom of Heaven

That definition of Nirvana expounded by the glorious Buddha with whom it is most often associated, should certainly put an end to all the nonsense that has been written and spoken about that blessed

The Buddha put it all clearly when He said in His last words to His disciples before leaving his physical vehicle : "Decay is inherent in all things made of component parts. The Truth alone will abide forever. Therefore work out your salvation with diligence." But the Buddha knew they would not take it to mean that they should work out their own exclusive salvation for their own personal good alone. For He had already engraved in their consciousness the flaming words of the Bodhisattva vow, which say :

"Never will I seek nor receive private
individual salvation ;

Never will I enter into final peace alone.

But forever and everywhere will I live
and strive
For the redemption of every creature
throughout the world."

The Christ, too, taught the same ideal. He lived for us and died for us. By following His teachings and living in the Christ-Consciousness we shall find that a wonderful thing has happened to us in our relations with our fellow-men. We shall be able to think, feel, act and speak in no other way but with loving kindness and Christly understanding, and thus the selfless Light of Love in our hearts will thenceforth pour out naught but a sweet benediction to our fellow-men and express "Peace be unto you all."

Is Islam Anti-Humanitarian ?

Dr. Mohammad Hafiz Syed, Ph.D., D.Litt.

[Allahabad]

The most tragic and heart-rending happenings, in the past, in the various parts of our country, have created great suspicion in our minds regarding the unwholesome influence that Islam is supposed to exercise on the lives and doings of its followers. It is believed in certain quarters that this religion preached by the Prophet of Islam is mainly responsible for it. It is alleged that Islam countenances and encourages arson, loot, abduction and forcible conversion. It, therefore, becomes the duty of every fair-minded person, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, to ascertain once for all whether the religion of Islam, which according to the unanimous verdict of the historians of the world wrought miraculous changes in transforming the lives of barbarous communities like the Arabs and elevated them from the lowest depth of moral degradation to a higher level of civilization, has really enjoined on its adherents to be so intolerant and

almost inhuman as to perpetrate all sorts of moral crimes in the name of God and religion, or has it any element of brotherliness, humanity, charity and mutual goodwill, or not.

Basic Principles

The basic principle of Islam, i.e., faith in all the prophets of the world, is enough to give the lie to these allegations. The great and liberal mind that preached not only love and respect for the founders of the great religions of the world, but much more than that, *faith in them*, could not shrink down to the level of utter intolerance for those very religions. Tolerance is not in fact the word that can sufficiently indicate the breadth of the attitude of Islam to other religions. It preaches equal love for all, equal respect for all, and equal faith in all. No compulsion was intended on the 'unbelievers' to accept Islam, for it was against all the broad principles in which Muslims had been brought

up. Their ideal was to establish religious freedom, to stop all religious persecution, to protect the houses of worship of all religions, mosques among them. Here are a few quotations :

"And had there not been God's repelling some people by others, there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches, and any synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered." (*Quran*, 22 : 40)

"And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion is only for God." (2 : 193)

"Every student of Islamic history knows that the Holy Prophet and his companions were subjected to the severest persecutions as Islam began to gain ground in Mecca." (*Introduction to the Quran by Muhammad Ali.*)

So from the first to the last, the Holy Quran allowed fighting only against those who fought the Muslims first; it allowed expressly only fighting in defence without which the Muslims could not live, and it clearly forbade aggressive war.

Waging of War on 'Unbelievers'

Again, intolerance could not be ascribed to a book which excludes compulsion from the sphere of religion altogether. "There is no compulsion in religion" (II, 256), the Quran lays down in the clearest words. In fact the Quran is full of statements showing that belief in this and that religion is a person's own concern, and that he is given the choice to adopt one way or another; that if he accepts truth, it is for his own good; and if he sticks to error, it is to his own detriment. A few quotations from the Quran are given below to prove the authenticity of these statements :

"The truth is from your Lord; so let him who please believe and let him who please disbelieve." (18 : 29)

"If you do good, you will do good for your own souls; and if you do evil, it shall be for them."

The Muslims were allowed to fight indeed, but with what object? To compel others to accept Islam is a myth, pure and simple, a thing unknown to the teachings of the Quran.

The conception of God in Islam is the God of all mankind and His favours are not confined to any 'chosen' people. The Muslims are prohibited from running down the deities of non-Muslims. The Holy Quran says :

"Reville not those whom they call on besides God, lest they in their ignorance despitely revile Him." (VI : 108)

No Distinction in Service

Every Muslim is enjoined not to make any distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim when he has an opportunity of serving a needy person. The Prophet says in unambiguous language :

"The whole world is the family of God. Therefore, he alone is good in His sight who accords kind treatment to all His creatures alike."

Further the Prophet says :

"Assist any person oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim."

"Whosoever goes with a tyrant to assist him, knowing him to be a tyrant, then verily he has gone out of Islam."

"It is not for the Muslim to ignore any one of the great teachers who have long since done their work and retired from this world; he dare not utter a word of disrespect towards them. On the contrary he is bound to show the greatest deference to each one of them." (IV : 150-152)

Respect to All Prophets

Speaking of the prophets of the house of Israel, the Quran says, "Say ye, we believe in God, and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and

Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to the other prophets from their Lord—we make no distinction between any of them; and to him we submit." (II-136, III-84)

"And it is not only to Moses and Jesus and Mohammad that the Muslim owes allegiance, but to all the prophets of all the nations who have appeared in the different ages of the history of mankind. Thus along with a thousand others, Ramachandra, Krishna, and Gautama Buddha of India, Zarathushtra of Persia and Confucius of China, have alike a place in the hearts of all true followers of Islam.

Forcible Conversion Disallowed

Forcible and unwilling conversion is repeatedly forbidden in the Quran. On the other hand it inculcates simple preaching through persuasion as the only permissible method for spreading the faith of Islam. The Quran's injunction is as clear as daylight. It puts it thus :

"There is no compulsion in faith." (II. 256)

"You shall have your religion and I shall have my religion." (cix : 109)

"And we have not sent thee otherwise than to mankind at large, to announce and to warn." (xxxvi : 27)

"(My) sole (work) is preaching from God and His message." (Lxxii : 24)

"Obey God and obey the apostle; but if you turn away, yet is our apostle only charged with plain-spoken preaching." (Lxiv : 12)

Ideal of Human Fraternity

In Islam, all humanity is one vast brotherhood, with God as their Creator and Master who looks upon them all as equal. All the barriers racial and others, raised against it by the self-interest of man are eschewed; difference and division merely on the ground of religion are not recognized. Its teachings are directly opposed to sectarianism and are generally based on

the broad principle of common humanity. "Be ye all worshippers of God and brothers to one another, like as God has commanded you." (*Sayings of Mohammad*, 904.) The service of man and the good of humanity constitute pre-eminently the service and worship of God. "All creation," says the Prophet of Islam, "is the family of God, and of all creation the most beloved of God is he who does most good to His family."

"God is not merciful to him who is not merciful to men." (*Sayings*, 511)

"The merciful God is merciful to those who are merciful: be ye then merciful to those who are in the earth, so that He who is in heaven may be merciful to you." (508)

"Ye shall not believe unless ye love one another." (194)

"By him in whose hand my life is—no worshipper (truly) believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." (214)

The essence of religion according to the teachings of Islam, is the service of the afflicted humanity. "Hast thou seen him who calls the religion a lie. That is (the man) who pushes away the orphan, and stirs not up (others) to feed the poor."

"And woe to those who pray—who of their prayers are unmindful, who make a show, and refuse help to the needy." (*The Quran*, cviii)

Muslims' Moral Duty

What is the duty of man in Islam? "Verily," says the Quran, "God commands justice and the doing of good, and the giving to those of kind (their due); and He forbids filthy actions and inequity and transgression." (*Quran*, xvi, 90)

"When one of you see wrong-doing," said the Prophet, "Let him undo it with his hand; and if he cannot do this, then let him speak against it with his tongue; and if he cannot do this either, then let

him abhor it with his heart—and this is the least of faith." (*Sayings*, 325)

"Assist one another in goodness and piety, but assist not one another in sin and enmity, and fear God; verily God is severe in punishing. And let not the malice of a people provoke you to transgress but act justly—it will be nearer to piety, and fear God; verily God is informed of what ye do." (*The Quran*, V, 2 and 8)

Harmlessness

Wanton destruction of life is considered reprehensible.

"There is no moving thing on the earth, nor a bird that flies with its wings, but is a being like to you to their Lord shall they be gathered." (VI, 38)

"Who kills a sparrow for nothing—it will cry aloud to God on the day of resurrection, saying, O my Lord, such and such a man killed me for no good." (*Sayings*, 36)

"Take not things, which have life, to shoot (arrows at)." (39)

The Prophet of Islam denounced the heartless act of men who burnt the abode of ants. (46, 54)

He forbade the robbing of eggs from the nests of birds. (55)

He forbade likewise the capturing of young birds and distressing the mother-bird and would have them restored to their nests (54 and 55)

The Prophet would goup to any dis-

tressed animal, and stroke him and enjoin upon their masters kindness against oppression and fatigue. (53)

Value of Human Life

Regarding the value of human life the Quran teaches: "Whoso kills a being, unless it be for another being, or for evil doing in the land, it is as though he killed all mankind, and whoso saves one, it is as though he saves all mankind."

In Chapter IV, verses 15 and 16, fornication is strictly denounced. Similarly abduction of innocent women, and killing of helpless children are condemned. Once more we are clearly reminded by the Prophet that "He who helpeth his fellow-creature in the hour of need, and he who helpeth the oppressed, him will God help in the day of travail. What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful and to remove the wrongs of the injured. Who is the most favoured of God? He from whom the greatest good cometh to His creatures."

From the quotations given above, it is for the readers to judge if Islam is anti-humanitarian, as some libel it, and it is for all Muslims to prove to the world the practical implications of the sacred teachings of Islam through their personal examples.

A RETREAT AT SIVANANDA NAGAR

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The Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

The Gospel of Sufism

Prof. Firoze C. Davar

[Ahmedabad]

The moral instinct is the tendency in man to turn from evil to goodness, from the line of least resistance to a height whose attainment spells labour and pain, but which promises the only true happiness on earth. Religion takes a step further and entertains a passion for goodness for its own sake, and not for utilitarian considerations. Religion finds it impossible to live without goodness, whatever the cost, as the fish finds it impossible to live out of water. Mysticism is the very core of religion and means absorption not merely in goodness but in the source of all goodness, the *fons et origo* and end of all earthly existence. The mystics of the world have certain characteristics in common, being above the life led by the masses.

Mystics

The mystics are the true spiritual aristocrats and they remain Self-secluded on the spiritual heights attained by them, which are inaccessible to the normal man. All mystics are monotheists, living in and loving the Almighty: they are pantheists realizing the divine presence everywhere, even in the lowest of His creation. This being so, they ignore evil and ugliness, for their eyes dwell upon the divine in everything, and the divine can never be anything but the beautiful. They are naturally inspired by a sense of world-brotherhood, for to them all life, despite its multiplicity, is a unity, through which runs the silver thread of the divinity that sparkles through all. Mystics can never be violent, for to strike another is to assault the God in him, nay, to hurt another is to hurt one's own self, for it is the same Self that suffuses all creation.

Origin of Sufism

The various mystic cults that arose in the world disclosed the same characteristics, and Sufism, which appeared soon after the promulgation of Islam, revealed the same distinctive features. The Zarathushtrianism of Iran gave way in the seventh century A.C., to the proselytizing impact of Islam. But both these religions encourage the active, not the ascetic life: they believe in benevolent and disinterested action, not in seclusion, celibacy and prolonged meditation on the Infinite. It should seem strange that such faiths should have created the mystic cult of the Sufis whose ends correspond with but whose means are diametrically opposed to those of the two faiths.

This very fact shows that mysticism is not a monopoly of any one country or race, but is the universal birthright of all: it is a root which seeks its own soil and flowers in every land. Besides, all great prophets, including Zarathushtra and Muhammad, were mystics at heart, ever thirsting for communion with the Infinite. It is consequently not difficult to seek the origin of Sufism in the Zarathushtrian and Islamic faiths, for ideas parallel to those held by the Sufis have ever been anxious to uphold their principles with the help of quotations from the Quran, which are often interpreted allegorically to suit their purpose, for they knew full well that adherence to principles unsanctioned by the Quran would prove disastrous and probably fatal.

Its Evolution Through External Influences

Sufism grew as we have seen from the Zarathushtrian and Islamic religions but it received its manure from various other

faiths which then prevailed in the East. The Buddhists were silently carrying on their propaganda and were particularly strong in East Iran. The Christians, too, were active in the dissemination of their faith among the various peoples of West Iran. Both these faiths influenced Sufism and confirmed its notions of asceticism, renunciation and meditation on the Infinite.

Sufism was also very largely coloured by Neo-Platonist principles so similar to those of the Indian Vedanta, that God was the only Reality and that the universe if conceived as distinct from God, was illusory. The Neo-Platonists held, as did the Sufis, that knowledge as a purely intellectual activity was futile in attaining the ultimate Truth, which could only be realized by absorption and identity through trance and ecstasy, not through logic and philosophy. Lastly, the Sufis had something to learn from the Gnostics who were believers in the gnosis or occult knowledge, without which, as they claimed, man who had been forgetful of his divine origin, would never be liable to establish his identity with the Infinite. Thus though the forms of Sufism remained Iranian, the Sufi mind was shaped and coloured by constant contact with different faiths and philosophies.

Fundamental Approach

The pivotal idea of Sufism is that a man must become God in order to know God: the Sufis thus emphasize not knowing but *being*.

There are some scholarly Sufis, but even they take their final stand not on knowledge but on their identification with God in blessed moments of trance and ecstasy, which can teach them more of the ultimate Reality "than all the sages can." They are as indifferent to the personal will as to knowledge, for they invariably prefer devotion to action, feeling to reason. They arrive at their truths immediately through

intuition, not by the slow process of science or the gradual dialectic and logical procedure. They are convinced of the validity of their truths which however they are unable to prove. Even when they differ from the masses, or from one another the Sufis are completely tolerant in their outlook, for they hold that God could be realized in the K'aba as well as in the idol-shrine. Such a measure of tolerance would indeed be rare in the average Muslim mind. Realizing, as they do, the divine presence everywhere, they are imbued with a sense of love and brotherhood for all creation which to them is but a manifestation in different form and degree of the Supreme Being.

Spiritual Disciplines

Identification with the Supreme, though consummation is devoutly to be wished, is not however easy of achievement till the Sufi has complete mastery over his carnal appetites by an unusual measure of self-control unthinkable by the masses. Hence the Sufis renounce the world, practise self-mortification, lead an ascetic life, associated with abject poverty and sometimes with celibacy. Many of them practise *Zikr* or constant repetition of a sacred word till they fall into a death-like trance, or they keep on dancing in a mystic whirl during which is revealed to them "the light that never was on sea or land."

These believers in universal oneness naturally scoff at caste distinctions; these introverts seem to have nothing in common with the extroverts of ordinary life. These believers in the cult of absolute faith have a light-hearted disregard for the forms and conventions of institutional religion and they are often found to ridicule the hypocrisy of priests who sometimes sacrifice spiritual ends for earthly gains. They ignore their own will, which they identify with the Lord's and are as

completely resigned to the divine decree as an infant is to its mother's.

Supernatural Powers

Many of these Sufi mystics are said to possess supernatural powers which enable them to work miracles, as depicted in Sufi literature, like walking on the sea, flying in the air, and converting base metals into gold. They have boundless veneration for their *Murshid* (spiritual preceptor) and they put up with his vagaries and his foul language, if it be occasioned, and are even prepared to interpret his apparent misdeeds in as favourable a light as possible, for they hold that a person of such spiritual eminence, who is above good and evil, can scarcely be tested by the petty measuring tapes of a materialistic society.

Scholars and Poets

Sufis are of various grades but only a few reach the fourth and final stage of divine beatitude. Sufism once permeated all levels of Iranian society. There have been learned Sufi scholars like Imam Ghazzali, and eminent Sufi mystics like Mansur Hallaj, Bazazid Bistami, Maruf Kirkhi, Siri Saqti, Ibrahim Adham, and Zunnun Misri, while Rabir Basri, like Mirabai of Mewar and Muktabai of Maharashtra, was a woman mystic. In fact with regard to Sufi saints it may be said their name is legion, and the same remark may hold good about the Sufi poets of Iran, though mention may be made of top figures like Sanai Attar, Rumi, Sadi, Hafiz, and Nami. The poetic literature of few countries has been so saturated by a movement as was that of Iran by the cult of Sufism and that of India by the Bhakti school of the Vaishnavites.

Emotional Love

Both these cults and their resultant poetic output are suffused with emotional love. The Vaishnavas conceive God

(Krishna) as the eternal Lover and the worshipper as the beloved (Gopi or milk-maid) whirling in ecstatic rapture round the object of her adoration. The Sufis on the contrary conceive God as the Beloved whose devotee is maddened by her beauty and fascinated by her charms. The Sufi poets have evolved a peculiar symbolism and a technical terminology to give it suitable expression. The lover (worshipper) needs wine (divine inspiration) to fire his spirit and warm him up for union with the beloved (God). The "sage" or cup-bearer is always there to encourage and inspire. The *Miakhana* (wine-shop) is the academy which inculcates divine secrets, and the *Pir-i-Mughan* (owner of wine-shop) is the *Murshid* (spiritual preceptor) of the Sufis. The devotee is sometimes called a *Rind* (debauchee) and sometimes a *Butparast* (idolater) adoring in terms of frenzied love the *Sanam* (the idol of his worship). In the absence of a correct understanding of the symbolical presentment, Sufi poetry is likely to appear obscene to the reader. However, it must also be admitted that excessive and uninterrupted indulgence in erotic imagery even when thinly veiled by a spiritual allegory, is bound sooner or later to exert a deleterious influence on the morals of the nation and especially on youthful minds.

Sufi Saints of India

Sufism was not confined to Iran alone but it came over with the Muslim conquerors of India. In the propagation of Islam in India the sword may not have been conspicuous by its absence but that weapon was wholly unthinkable when the calm gospel of Sufism began to prevail and when only like was attracted to like. The result was that several Hindus became disciples of Muslim Sufis as some Muslims sat at the feet of Hindu mystics. The first

Sufi preceptor in North India was Makhdum Saiyad Ali al Hujviri, who later on departed from his native place Hujvir and settled and died at Lahore in 1072 A.C. He was the author of the well-known Sufistic work *Kashf al Mahjub* (Unveiling of the Veiled).

The grand Chishti school of Sufis in India is best represented by Khaja Muin Uddin Chishti (died 1236 A.C.) whose tomb at Ajmer still annually attracts vast crowds of devoted followers from all over India. Another great Indian Sufi was Nizamuddin Huliya (preceptor of the well-known poet Amir Khusru Dehlavi of the 13th century) Shaikh Salim Chishti was the preceptor of Akbar who had such implicit faith in him that his (Akbar's) son known in history as Jahangir was named Salim after the Sufi saint. Even members of the royal family lent a willing ear to the Sufis, the best instances being that of Shah Jahan's children, Jahanara Begam and Dara Shikuh. The latter was the author of *Majma al Bahrim* (Confluence of Two Streams—Hinduism and Islam). Dara's preceptor was the God-intoxicated nude Iranian Sufi, Sarmad, who was executed by Aurangzeb's orders.

The Sufi creed is seen to be active even in Gujarat, where lived the great Sufi, Saiyad Burhanu din Abu Muhammad Abdattah Bukhari, known as the Qutbi Alam, who died and was buried in 1453 A.C. at Vatwa, near Ahmedabad. One of his twelve sons was Sirajuddin Abul

Barkat Saiyad Muhammad, celebrated by the name of Shah Alam. He was immensely popular in Ahmedabad, where his shrine is annually visited by large numbers of devoted admirers. As may be expected, Sufism prevailed even in Sind where Shah Latif was noted as an eminent Sufi as well as poet, the other Sufis of Sind being Shah Inayat and Lal Shabaz. Thus the unarmed Sufis carried the non-violent gospel of the Spirit to India to help those who cared to profit by their preachings.

Sufism in Iran began gradually to decline after the rise of Safuri power early in the sixteenth century. We are living in times distinctly unfavourable to the growth of mysticism. The increasing tempo of rationalism, the spread of machinery, the boundless progress of science, blind pursuit of wealth, the ceaseless struggle for existence, the aggressive attitude of bellicose nations even in times of peace—are factors which are ill in accord with the calm and tranquillity needed in mysticism. Yet mysticism is an ever-green plant, and is sure to shoot up in Iran or in India or anywhere else in the world, where a pious heart, distracted by cares and worries, may resolve to revoke his earthly bondage, renounce his cherished possessions and seek through meditation and trance that source of supreme happiness, foreseen by prophets and celebrated in songs by poets but attained only by a few blessed souls since the dawn of civilization.

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The Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

The Doctrine of Sufism

Sri Justice K. M. Jawari

(High Court, Bombay)

The word *Sufi* is related to *tasawoof* one who puts on woollen garments. It is a creed which originated in ancient Persia in the eighth century and represents a revolt against the rigid laws of the wearisome rituals of the orthodox Mullas. So far as the Sufi creed is concerned, it is said to resemble Pantheism ultimately. In religion there is a close connection between Pantheism and Mysticism, and Sufism laterly did develop into a Pantheistic mysticism.

The Sufi acknowledges both a Deity, i.e., a Divine Being, and a soul, and aspires to a growing acquaintance such as will culminate in ecstatic devotion to the Divine Being—a love which will so envelop the soul as to dispel all base affections and desires. For attaining this consummation five stages are laid down : (1) obedience to the Law of God, (2) love—the attraction of the soul to God, (3) seclusion—meditation on divine subjects or entities, (4) knowledge—metaphysical studies on the nature and the attributes of God, and (5) ecstasy—the emotion brought about by a full comprehension of the divine love and power of God. However, according to a devoted Sufi, no definition can convey to the uninitiated the esoteric meanings attached to these five stages in the progress of the soul.

Most of our Persian poetry has been inspired by the doctrine of Sufism. Hafiz, Saadi, Rumi and a host of other poets have won international fame because of their Sufistic trend of thought in their poetry. Omarkhayam—whom Fitzgerald has immortalized—is one of them. The second stage, love, and the fifth one, ecstasy, have been the ones on which they centre round.

What is the ultimate goal of a struggling soul in this world ? To become one with God, to forget oneself, one's individuality, and to be absorbed in Him. Union is the Goal. It is called *wasl*.

To illustrate this metaphorically, God is portrayed as the Beloved,—*Maashuk*, and the soul, the lover, *ashak*. Poets point out as a pattern of this state of mind to the attraction to a lamp for a butterfly. Unless the butterfly flies into the flame and becomes consumed in it, loses itself in it, it is not satisfied. Similarly, unless one reaches an ecstatic state of mind one cannot lose oneself, one cannot forget oneself, and become one with the Reality.

The Sufi cult is all-embracing. It is classless and casteless. Hafiz thus addresses himself :—

Hafiz qar wasl khahi
Sulh kun ba khaso am
Ba Musalman Allah Allah
Ba Brahman Ram Ram.

"O Hafiz if thou wouldst have union, then be at peace with the great and the small. Bid welcome to a Muslim with 'Allah, Allah.' Bid welcome to a Brahmin with 'Ram, Ram'."

Sufism came to India along with the advent of the Mohammedans. Persian poets coming straight from Persia, of course, sang verses called *ghazals* in Persian but it filterated down along the passage of time to Indian nationals, like Hali and Iqbal and other poets, who reproduced in Urdu, the soul and spirit of the verses of indigenous Persian poets including the *Masnavis* of Rumi. But the process of filtration did not stop with North India where Urdu was the current language. It came down to Gujarat also, where to write of

lover and beloved and their travails and their union became the vogue with the late prince-poet Kalapi, the late professor M. N. Durwesh, the late Bala Shanker Kantharia and others. Muslim poets like Shayada and others follow the same vogue, and Sufism in that form is still alive in Gujarat.

Krishna Bhakti resembles the love aspect in Sufism in great many respects. The love of Radha and Krishna seems to echo in the Sufi doctrine.

Indeed, in this material world, spiritual darkness would be relieved by flashes of mystic creeds like Sufism, if more is known about them.

The Place of Reason in Islam

Sri H. Ahmed, M.A.

What is Islam?

Mohammad defined Islam as purity of thought, speech and action. At another occasion he defined Islam as hospitality and tolerance. Religion, according to the Prophet of Islam, is a straight natural law for men to follow, the natural bent of a free, unbiased mind, and man the vice-regent of God on earth in a very real sense, inspired by his Master to know the good and refuse the evil. In short, Islam is a religion of Nature. Men from different religions and countries can be Muslims by virtue of their steadfastness and good character. Islam stands for success and progress in the world. Islam, if properly interpreted, can be understood by the term "practical mysticism."

What It is Not!

The religion of Islam stands forth free of all mystery, dogmas and articles of faith which are inconsistent with reason and commonsense. There is no declaration of faith in Islam. There is also no place of sectarianism in it.

The outward show to which the Muslims all over the world give undue importance is not Islam. Performing a set of rites in a prescribed way is not Islam. In the early days of Islam the Prophet "did away with all ceremonies which were in the hands of designing priesthood." To believe in angels, resurrection, life after death, heaven,

hell, etc., in a certain manner is not Islam. Giving particular types of names is not Islam.

The whole structure of the present day Islam rests on the 'Sayings' of the Prophet. The scholars of Islam are fully aware that these grounds (i.e., Fikh and the sayings) are not firm. Thus it is my contention that the so-called Islam of today which rests on these unfirm grounds is not at all the Islam as taught by the great Prophet of Arabia through the Quran.

Religion of Cast Iron Dogma?

There is a universal tendency to indulge in obscure and obsolete practices without ever trying to know their origin. Islam became an easy prey of this tendency. The teachings of Islam, which are sublime and inclusive of all nations and races and which constitute the crown of all culture, have degenerated to a considerable extent. There is no spirituality in the present day Islam. It is a universal truth that when narrow-minded fanaticism raises its ugly head, spiritual stagnation prevails. The mind of the present-day Muslims is not the mind which the Quran wanted to build or which it actually built in the early centuries of the Islamic era. The Islam which, was taught by the great Prophet has changed to a remarkable degree. At present its ideas and teachings have crystallized and have found their expression in stereotyped

formulae. It has become a religion of cast iron dogmas. Since the death of the Prophet, the religious life of the Muslims has progressively degenerated.

Who is to be Blamed ?

The German writer Karl May through his travel and adventure-novels has not misrepresented Islam so such as have the 'sincere enemies' of Islam done from within. The Christian missionaries also have greatly exploited the weaknesses of the misrepresented Islamic doctrines. They are not to be blamed for that. In fact, all those Muslims are to be blamed who in the course of centuries have brought down the grand and noble principles of Islam to their own level and interpreted the Quran according to their own thinking. The missionaries, in fact, opened the eyes of many Muslims and have helped in arriving at the original teachings. Swami Dayananda Saraswati of India, by writing the famous fourteenth chapter of his book, "Satyarth Prakash"—the Bible of the Arya Samaj Movement, has not done any harm to Islam, as compared to the harm done by orthodox Muslim theologians. The Zionist Movement in spite of all its orthodoxy has not misconstrued the teachings of Islam. The teachings of Islam were already misconstrued mostly by the orthodox Muslim scholars.

It is very disappointing to note that even to this day, the thinking of the majority of Muslim scholars is medieval. Most of the Muslim delegates to the recent Colloquium of Islamic Culture, sponsored jointly by the Library of Congress and the Princeton University, opposed the Western scholars' suggestion that modern critical methods should be applied to the Quran Texts. The Quran to which, it was also felt, the Islamic culture goes for the basic spirit and inspiration, I leave to the reasonable judgment of the reader to decide as to who is to be blamed.

Degeneration of Islam

The people of the Mosque are engrossed in a social order, perpetuated under the aegis of a fanatical hierarchy, to whom all sense of rationality appears heretical. The present-day Muslims have become hopelessly dependent on the orthodox, ignorant and self-appointed Mullahs and this has deprived them of judgment and enterprize. Around the religion of Islam have grown up religious dogmas and superstitions which have profoundly damaged the cultural developments of the Muslims. The whole structure is so hopelessly degenerated that it urgently requires liquidation if no reform is possible.

The Rejuvenation Triangle

In spite of the present-day position the situation is not so hopeless. If the Muslims desire that their religion should be recognized as a precious world-religion and that they should have a prominent place among the nations of the world, they should not waste a single moment in establishing friendly relations with Hindus, Jews and Christians. They should try to adjust themselves in the comity of nations. They should show gestures of goodwill towards others. They should abandon the false superiority-complex and should try to understand the points of view of others. This is not difficult as Islam is capable of adapting itself to new conditions and absorbing all that is best in the world's culture without departing from its basic principles.

To reconcile Islam with Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity, is not only a matter of primary importance for the whole of humanity but is the urgent need of the day. I have deliberately omitted other religions as the differences with them are not so deep-rooted. The areas of disagreement between the followers of the above-mentioned religions should be narrowed as much as possible. They all have had great careers

which have influenced the civilizations of the world. Similarly, there are many points in common between Islam, Christianity and Judaism. They rose among semetic people and in the same quarter of the globe. Both Christianity and Islam (in their outward form) were inspired by Greek thought in its Neo-Platonic form. They need not and they must not be enemies, says Sir Nizam Jung. There need be no rivalry between them, but only a wholesome spirit of accommodation if they have not lost their high ideal. The present position, however, must be changed in which Mohammadans call the Christians "infidels" and the Christians call the Mohammadans "heathens." Such reconciliation is possible to achieve as it is a recognized fact that the original teachings of all the religions are identical in principle. Various Prophets brought one and the same Message. They all persuaded the people to right action and exhorted them to live a better life and also described the principles underlying the progress and decline of nations. They explained the law of nature in a clear manner. They suggested new ways according to new conditions. They showed how a man should live in the world in safety and in accordance with the principles of evolution. The message of all Prophets was nothing but the way towards the good of all men. No Prophet gave a new religion. They only interpreted the one universal religion in a different way. It is high time to take advantage of these common grounds of agreement and to sink the differences beneath the grand principles of the respective religions. It should be the highest aim of the Muslims to try to establish friendly relations and understanding with others. If we succeed in this undertaking, the ultimate victory of the forces of truth and justice

will be assured. Let Muslim take the lead.

Thus will be laid the foundation-stone of a new world order. As Rev. E.W. Bethman, Director of Research and Publications, American Friends of the Middle East, has pointed out: "All our problems culminate finally in the one great problem of human relations, the relationship between man and man—people and people."

Conclusion

If I have been successful to show why I have laboured to point out the place of reason in Islam, I shall be more than happy. My views may raise some criticism among the orthodox scholars of Islam in certain parts of the world. My idea in writing this article is to stir the imagination of young Muslims. It is for them to calculate as to how much harm is done to humanity by religious orthodoxy. The reader will observe that I have expressed my view very bluntly and very frankly. Liberals for their liberality may compromise with the orthodoxy but I being an "orthodox Liberal" can not do so. I am not sorry for the frankness but I am sorry for not being able to express my point of view more elaborately due to the limited space. No one with reason and commonsense can accept the present situation. A new world order can be ushered in if the obsolete religious conventions which are responsible for dividing one religion from the other and for creating differences are intelligently challenged and effectively remodelled. It is by no means an easy task. It requires mental emancipation in the first instance, followed by a long and hard struggle. A careful study of the religious reform movements in Islam will show how independent minds suffered and how their ideology was suppressed by the fanatics in the name of dogmatism and 'Shariat.' The present intellectual standards are much to their sacrifices.*

*A Paper read at one of the World Religion Congresses held under the auspices of the Ananai-Kyo, Japan.

Ashram News and Notes

Sivaratri

The Mahasivaratri Vrata was observed at Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, on March 10 and 11. A number of visitors, among them a party of about thirty devotees from Madras led by Sri Omji Maharaj (E. Gopalakrishnamoorthy), participated along with the Ashramites in this ancient religious observance, which included Maharudrabhisheka, Veda-patha, and Havana at Viswanath Mandir, in the morning hours, and all-night worship of the Lord with Rudrabhisheka, Laksharchana, and continuous chanting of the Panchakshara Mantra.

Initiation

On this holy occasion, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj initiated into the Order of Sanyasa, eight spiritual aspirants who are now known as : Swamis Santananda (R. Chandrasekhar), Sivasubramanyananda (Sivasubramanya Iyer), Adwaitananda (Hari Singh), Guruparananda—1 (Chellam Iyer), Guruparananda—2 (Ramananda), Swarupananda (Erich Pierschel, of Germany), Dayananda (Jagadamba, of France), and Ramapremananda (Mowni Sindhi Mata).

Earlier, on February 21, Sri Swamiji Maharaj initiated into the Order of Sanyasa Mrs. Sylvia Hellmann, of Canada, who was given the name, Swami Radhananda.

Discourses by His Holiness

On February 12, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj attended, with a party of disciples, the Saint Thyagaraja Aradhana Mahotsava (reported briefly earlier) held under the auspices of the Dakshina Bharat Sangh at Dehra Dun, in the premises of the Doon School. His Holiness gave a discourse on the life and work of the famous South Indian composer-saint, and presented certificates of honour to a few artistes for

their service and distinction in the field of music, dance, Bhakti and Seva.

On February 27, Sri Swamiji Maharaj addressed a gathering of over 700 cadets, officers and other ranks, in the premises of the Sainik School (National Defence Academy), when he presented before them a general outline of the spiritual principles of life and stressed the ennobling desirability of the inculcation of the spirit of Karma Yoga. A large number of booklets, books and periodicals containing the teachings of Swamiji Maharaj, among them a specially printed pamphlet entitled *Soldier and Saint*, were distributed to the audience present. The other features of the function included vocal recitals of Hindustani music by Swami Nadabrahmananda and demonstration of Yoga exercises by Swami Bhumananda and others.

A new feature of the Ashram's evening Satsanga during the period under review (from the last week of February to the last week of March) was a series of inspiring discourses by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, which covered the following subjects: 'Essence of Yoga,' 'Three Essentials of Sadhana,' 'Patience,' 'Integral Sadhana,' 'Philosophy of Life and Death,' 'Glory of Sanyasins,' 'Four Kinds of Consciousness,' 'Advice to Sanyasins,' 'Divorce Not Good for Indians,' 'Nature of Brahman,' 'Formulae for Meditation,' 'Vairagya,' and 'Non-dual Consciousness.' The discourses are being continued and will be later compiled in book form.

Discourses by Distinguished Visitors

Dr. Stanley Jones, the renowned American preacher of the Methodist Mission and the author of *Abundant Living*, visited the Ashram on March 13 and 14, when he gave

two impressive discourses on 'Karma and the Cross,' and 'Christ As I Know Him.' He also held a conference where spiritual experiences of various aspirants were exchanged. He was accompanied by Dr. Herbert, of the New Zealand Mission Hospital, Jagadhari, Punjab, and Rev. Talabuddin, and Rev. Mathura Das, of Saharanpur, U.P.

During the second week of March, Sri Kashi Viswanatha Ghanapatigal held a series of illuminating discourses on the Bhagavata Purana.

On March 16, Prof. Jean Herbert, formerly Chief Interpreter at the United Nations Centre at Geneva, who is also a distinguished Indologist, and the translator of the French edition of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's *Concentration and Meditation*, paid a visit to the Ashram. He made two scholarly speeches on the esoteric significance of the Pauranic teachings, and was presented with an address of felicitation by the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University. He was accompanied by Srimati Huquette Herbert who sang a melodious couplet of Hindi Kirtan.

In the last week of March, Dr. M. Boss, Professor of Psychiatry at the Zurich University, who is now on a visit to India, spoke on the purpose of his coming to this country and on the ontological aspect of existentialism and on the causes of psychosomatic illnesses. Dr. Miss Norell, founder of the Psychiatry Centre at Lucknow, also spoke on the establishment of her Clinic and on psychotherapy in general.

Dr. D.K. Viswanathan, M.P.H., F.A.Sc., Director of Public Health, Government of Bombay, gave two discourses on his reflections in relation to his coming in contact with Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, and a few of the disciples of the saint.

Srimati Hanna Herrmann, of Switzerland,

gave a series of discourses on 'Vedanta and Christianity,' and on the 'validity of reincarnation.'

Music Performances

Vocal recitals of the Karnatic music were given by Srimati Prema and Vidya Doraiswamy, and Sri V.N. Vaidyanathan, M.A., during the first week of March. In the same week, the participants at the Ashram's evening Satsanga were treated to delightful *veena* recitals, covering a wide range of Karnatic *ragas*, by Sri C.S. Anantapadmanabhan, of New Delhi, and his son, Sri A. Narasimhan. A few folk-dance recitals were also given by Kumari Lalita, sister of Sri V.N. Vaidyanathan.

The Holi holidays gave an opportunity to a number of devotees to visit the Ashram during the last week of March. This also gave a chance to Sri Swamiji Maharaj to make the best use of their talents. Consequently, the Satsanga audience was treated to melodious Bhajans and recitals of different *ragas*, by Srimati A.R. Ramani Ammal, of Bangalore; Srimati Sivananda-Vani, Producer of Music, All-India Radio, Delhi; and Kumari Archana Roy, and Sri P.K. Acharya, of New Delhi, during the last week of the month. Sri Joshi, of Delhi, also spoke on general spiritual topics on his visit to the Ashram, on the same occasion.

Farewell

Speaking at a farewell function given on the eve of the departure home of Sri Olgerts Kaugerts, of Melbourne, Australia, after a stay of about six months at the Ashram, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj extolled the noble spiritual qualities of this unobtrusive and yet a great and sincere seeker of Truth, and said: "Sri Kaugerts is a Yogi cum Jnani. He radiates the rays of joy, bliss and serenity, and has helped the Divine Life Society, as a founder of the Melbourne Branch, and also otherwise, in a variety of ways. He has

spontaneous generosity, and love for all and love for the Divine Cause." Sri Kaugerts was presented with a farewell address by the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, and was awarded the title of *Yogi* by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Title Awards

The following were among those who also received the titles mentioned hereunder from Sri Swamiji Maharaj:

Veda-Vedanta-Purana Vachaspati: Sri Kashi Viswanatha Ghanapatiqal.

Sangita Samrat: Sri V.N. Vaidyanathan, M.A.

Gana Sudhakara: Sri Vidya Doraiswamy; Sri Lalita; Sri Archana Roy.

Sangita Jyoti: Sri P.K. Acharya; Srimati Prema Doraiswamy.

Sankirtan Ratna: Srimati Huguette Herbert; Srimati A.R. Ramani.

Vainika Jyoti: Sri C.S. Anantapadmanabhan; Sri A. Narasimhan.

Nrityakalanidhi: Sri Lalita.

Vidya Bhaskara: Sri Jean Herbert.

Mano Vijnana Acharya and Master of Psychiatry: Dr. M. Boss; Dr. Miss Norell.

Visiting Aspirants

The following were among the visiting aspirants who stayed at the Ashram during the period under review besides some of those mentioned earlier:

Sri Lettice Grove, of England; Sri Kanematsu, of Japan; Sri Erik Oyldenkron, of Copenhagen; Dr. M. Boss, Professor of Psychiatry, Zurich University; Dr. Miss Norell, Director of Psychiatry Centre, Lucknow; and Dr. Lila Vlachou, of Greece.

Visitors

On February 28, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj received Sri Ram Rup Singh, I.A.S., Commissioner of Kumaon Division; Sri S.N. Verma, Sri G.P. Bagchi, and Sri B. N. Swarup, District Magistrates of Tehri Garhwal, Pauri Garhwal, and Almora,

respectively; and Sri S. Hamid, Additional District Magistrate, of Nainital.

Sri Swamiji Maharaj also received a few days later about thirty Deputy Project Officers, Development Block, Government of U.P., who were led by Sri S.P. Agarwal.

The following were some of the other visitors to the Ashram during the period under review:

Sri T. Srivastava, I.P.S., Deputy Inspector-General of Police, U.P.; Sri Ram Narayan Singh, Superintendent of Police, Tehri Garhwal; Sri Rudolf von Duckelmann, of Austria; Mrs. Trautmann, and Mrs. Radloff, of Dehra Dun; Sri Theodore von Radloff, of Dehra Dun; Sri T.M. Subramaniam, I.P.S., New Delhi; Srimati B. Sitabai, New Delhi; Sri S.M. Padday, Port Elizabeth, South Africa; Sri M. Fukazawa and Sri H. Fukazawa, of Japan; Mrs. Lintern, Perth, Australia; Dr. Emil Mosonyi, Director of the Institute of Hydraulic Planning, Budapest; Sri Matheson, of Switzerland; Dr. D.K. Viswanathan, Director of Public Health, Bombay State; Dr. B.G. Adhwaryoo, M.B.B.S., D.O., of Patan, Gujarat, who was accompanied by a group of his friends; and Sri G.B. Kotak, ex-Minister, Govt. of Saurashtra.

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Vishnudevananda's Visit to Banaras and Delhi

On his way back from Calcutta (vide the *D.L.* March issue, page 72), Swami Vishnudevananda, Professor of Hatha Yoga at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, visited the Hindu University at Banaras, where he was received by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar. On February 15, the Swami gave a discourse on the benefits of Asanas and Pranayamas at the Girls College, besides explaining some of them, which were demonstrated by Miss Sylvia Heck, of Montreal.

On February 16, Swami Vishnudevananda gave a similar demonstration and

explained the technique and the benefit accrued from the practice of these Yoga exercises. The meeting was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and was attended by a large number of students. While introducing Swami Vishnudevananda to the audience, Dr. Aiyar spoke about the useful dissemination of India's ancient spiritual culture that was being effected by Sri Swami Sivananda and also about the importance of learning Yoga exercises which he himself practised.

During his visit to Delhi, on February 22, Swami Vishnudevananda held another

demonstration of Yoga exercises at the Rashtrapati Bhawan which was arranged by Major-General Yadunath Singh, Military Secretary to the President of India. Miss Sylvia Heck also held a similar demonstration for ladies at the President's Lodge.

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"Himalaya Vani"

A periodical bulletin in Telugu, titled *Himalaya Vani*, containing the teaching of Sri Swami Sivananda, is being issued by the Sivanananda Sevashram, Dronachalam, Andhra State, under the editorship of Sri G. Sreenivasa Rao.

Sivananda School of Yoga and Vedanta in Canada

I, the undersigned, Ursula Hellmann, hereby declare and certify:

1. That I intend to carry on this enterprize under the name of *Sivananda School of Yoga and Vedanta*, a social movement for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge and for imparting practical training in all branches of Yoga—a non-profit enterprize financed by the voluntary donations of interested men and women throughout Canada;

2. That the said *Sivananda School of Yoga and Vedanta* has its office at 4560 Saint Catherine Street West, Apartment 32, Montreal 6, P.Q., and that I am the only person representative and interested of that said project for the Dominion of Canada;

3. I further declare that I am a widow of Albert Hellman, nee (Demmich).

Sd. Ursula Hellmann.

Dated in Montreal, P.Q., this 6th day of March, 1956.

Filed and registered March 6, 1956.

Sd. Deputy Prothonotary.

Acknowledgement

"SRI GANESALAYA PARARTHA NITYA POOJAKRAMA"

This is an important brochure, in Grantha script, which contains the Ganesa Sadasopachara Puja Vidhi, Ganesa Mudras, Ganesa Gayatri Mantra, Ashtotra Namavali and many other allied matters, which, we trust, will be greatly welcome to all worshippers of Sri Ganesa. The publication can be obtained from Sri K.S. Swaminatha Kurukkal, 11 Thambu Chetty Street, Muthialpet, Madras, at Annas eight.

Thirty-Fourth All-India Yoga-Vedanta Conference

As announced earlier, the thirty-fourth All-India Yoga-Vedanta Conference and the thirty-fourth Divine Life Sadhana Week will be held at Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, from 19th to 22nd of this month, under the direct guidance of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Representatives of religious institutions, irrespective of any denomination, members and associates of the Divine Life Society, and all spiritual seekers in general, are cordially invited to participate in the Yoga-Vedanta Conference and the Sadhana Week, after informing the Secretary, Divine Life Society, of their arrival.

Whilst no lodging and boarding fees are required to be paid by the participants, voluntary donation towards the defrayal of the expenses will be thankfully accepted. The following is the programme :

Common Features on All Days

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| 4-30 a.m. to 6 a.m. | Collective prayer, Japa, meditation, chanting of Shanti Mantras, Guru Stotras, etc. |
| 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. | Performance of Asana, Pranayama, and other Yogic exercises under the supervision of a demonstrator. |
| 7-30 p.m. to 10 p.m. | Satsanga: discourses on general spiritual topics and musical performances including Sankirtan and Bhajan. |

19th April

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|----------------------|---|
| 7 a.m. to 7-30 a.m. | Prabhat Pheri. |
| 8-30 a.m. to 11 a.m. | Recitations from the Bhagavadgita; discourses on the teachings of the Bhagavadgita. |
| 3-30 p.m. to 4 p.m. | Mantra-writing. |
| 4 p.m. to 6-30 p.m. | Discourses on "Spiritual Life" and "Path of Sadhana." |

20th April

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| 8-30 a.m. to 10 a.m. | Discourses on the "Basic Tenets of Religion" and the "Underlying Unity of All Faiths." |
| 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. | 22nd meeting of the All-World Religions Federation. |
| 3-30 p.m. to 4 p.m. | Mantra-writing competition. |
| 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. | 20th Annual Meeting of the Divine Life Society. |
| 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. | Discourses on the "Yoga of Synthesis." |
| 6 p.m. to 6-30 p.m. | Ganga Puja and Arati. |

21st April (Ekadasi)

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| 8-30 a.m. to 11 a.m. | Discourses on Raja Yoga and "Practice of Concentration and Meditation." |
| 3-30 p.m. to 4 p.m. | Explanation of the Yoga Museum, if convenient. |
| 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. | 17th meeting of the All-World Sadhus Federation. |
| 5 p.m. to 6-30 p.m. | Discourses on Karma Yoga. |

22nd April

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| 8-30 a.m. to 11 a.m. | Discourses on Bhakti Yoga; a Havana for universal peace and welfare will be simultaneously held at Viswanath Mandir. |
| 4 p.m. to 6-30 p.m. | Discourses on "Practice of Vedanta." |

N.B.—The programme is subject to modification to suit the convenience of the visiting aspirants. Additional features, such as the enactment of a drama, if any, will be notified in the daily programme announced in the Ashram's notice board.

Seventieth Birthday of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

Revered Self,

Salutations and prostrations.

We are extremely happy to announce that vigorous steps are being taken to celebrate the glorious seventieth Birthday of H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, on the 8th September, 1956.

A Committee of the following seven great devotees of Sri Swamiji Maharaj has been formed with Sri Swami Mohanananda as Chairman to advise and guide us to make the celebrations a grand success.

Major-General A.N. Sharma (retired), New Delhi.

Dewan Bahadur K.S. Ramaswami Sastri, Madras.

Sri N.C. Ghosh, M.A., Calcutta

Principal K.R.R. Sastry, M.A., M.L., Jaipur.

Dr. B.G. Adhucaryoo, M.P.B.S, D O., Gujarat.

Sri H. Nilakantan, Calcutta.

Srimati Sivananda-Vani, A.I.R., New Delhi.

It is the earnest desire of all of us that maximum advantage should be taken of this appropriate occasion to further the noble cause of the dissemination of spiritual knowledge for which Sri Gurudev has dedicated his divine life.

We earnestly solicit your noble self's valuable guidance and co-operation.

May God bless you!

P.O. Sivanandanaagar,
Rishikesh, U.P.

Thy humble Sevak,
Swami Madhavananda,
Secretary, Divine Life Society.

Sivananda Pillar

Sri Swami Sivananda's Divine Life Message is the practical formulation of Eternal Wisdom. It is a Message for all Ages.

Spiritual aspirants or seekers after Truth are fully aware of the delusive power of materialism that is constantly trying to veil the Truth from the inward gaze of Man. Even after a sage has effected a powerful soul-awakening, man so easily slips back into his worldly ways that nothing that we can do to prevent this is too much.

Pillar-inscription is an ancient and well-tried method of preserving a sage's Message.

To begin with, the idea is to have one Pillar in almost every town in India. To initiate this, it has been decided to erect one Pillar on the holy banks of the Ganga, at the Ashram at Sivananda Nagar, the holy scene of Sage Sivananda's dynamic selfless service.

We are in active consultation with experts whose estimate of the actual cost of erecting a Pillar will be announced later.

The Pillar will have inscribed on it (i) the very essence of Sri Swami Sivananda's teachings and (ii) a brief account of the life of Sri Swamiji—in English and Hindi.

Your valuable suggestions, guidance and assistance in regard to this divine enterprise are humbly solicited.

—Secretary, Divine Life Society